(d) details of National Health Schemes to be continued with renewed thrust and changes under consideration,

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF HEALTH AND FAMILY WELFARE (SHRI SALEEM IQBAL SHERVANI): (a) and (b) In view of the new priorities which have emerged in the health sector and keeping in mind the status of attainment of various goals it has been decided to undertake an exercise leading to the revision of the policy. This is at a preliminary stage.

(c) The thrust areas in the health sector inter-alia include measures to contain emerging and re-emerging diseases, improvement of surveillance and epidemic response systems, reproductive and child health, capacity building of institutions and health infrastructure and greater health education.

(d) The major National Health Programmes for control/eradication of communicable and non-communicable diseases like malaria, TB., leprosy, blindness, AIDs, cancer and the Family Welfare programmes will continue with much vigour.

Financial Assistance From the Discretionary Quota of the Minister

385. SHRI S. MUTHU MANI: Will the Minister of HEALTH AND FAMILY WELFARE be pleased to state:

(a) how many people have sought financial assistance for major operationUreatment from the discretionary grant of the Heatlh Minister during 1993 to December, 1996;

(b) total number of beneficiaries under the said discretionary grant during the said year;

(c) total amount released for the said grant during the said year;

(d) whether it is a fact that the applications for the said grant from the poor persons were not processed in time even after submitting all the required documents; and

(e) if so, the action taken by the Ministry to release grant well in time?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF HEALTH & FAMILY WELFARE (SHRI SALEEM IQBAL SHERVANI): (a) The total number of people who have sought financial assistance for major operationUreatment from discretionary grant of Health Minister during 1995 to December, 1996 is 4544 only.

(b) The total number of persons benefitted under the said scheme of discretionary grant during the said period is 690 only.

(c) The total amount released under the said scheme of grant during the said period is Rs. 80,25,887/- (Rupee? eighty lakhs twenty five thousands eight hundred eighty seven only).

(d) and (e) No, Applications for financial assistance are processed promptly. Immediately
on receipt of applications with complete information/documents the cases are submitted
for consideration of Hon'ble Health Minister with the recommendations of Directorate General of Health Services. The commitment letters of sanctioned amount is issued to the concerned hospital for treatment\operation of the patients with the request to send the information whether the patient has been admitted. On getting confirmation from the hospital that the patient has been admitted, amount of sanctioned grant is immediately released to the hospital.

Steps to Educate people for Taking Preventive Measure Against Aids

386. SHRI O.P. KOHLI: Will the Minister of HEALTH AND FAMILY WELFARE be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government's attention has been drawn to the news report appearing in the Indian Express dated 23rd December, 1996, under the caption "study points given picture of AIDS in India"; and

(b) if so, the steps taken or proposed to be taken to properly educate the people about it and also to take precautionary and preventive steps to contain the spread of the dreadful and suicidal disease?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF HEALTH AND FAMILY WELFARE (SHRI SALEEM IQBAL SHERVANI): (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) All the media of communication including interpersonal communication are being used both by Central and State Govemment to create public awareness about how HIV/AIDS, Sexually Transmitted Diseases (STDs) spread, how these can be prevented and